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SUBJECT: SEOUL - PRESS BULLETIN; April 8, 2009

TOP HEADLINES

All

Former President Roh Admits That His Wife Received Money from
Taekwang Industrial Chairman Park Yeon-cha
to Repay Debt

DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS

Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan told the National Assembly yesterday
that the ROKG will make diplomatic efforts to resume the Six-Party
Talks after UN Security Council discussions on North Korea conclude.
(Hankook)

Amid mounting calls in political circles to send a special envoy to
North Korea to facilitate inter-Korean talks, the Blue House said
yesterday that it has no such plan. (Dong-a)

There are mounting calls in ROK military and political circles for
the ROK to extend its missile range to over 500km, because the ROK's
current 300km-range missiles cannot strike military bases in the
rear of North Korea. (Chosun)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

The UN Security Council yesterday failed to agree on a response to
North Korea's latest rocket launch. (JoongAng, Hankook, Hankyoreh,
Segye, Seoul, all TVs, Pressian)

According to AP, the U.S. would likely find a compromise by
thoroughly enforcing existing UN sanctions on North Korea.
(JoongAng)

According to Japan's Jiji news agency, Japan has
decided to independently pursue sanctions on
North Korea. (JoongAng, Hankyoreh, Segye)

Gen. James Cartwright, Vice Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of
Staff, in an April 6 press conference, called into question North

Korea's rocket science technology by asking: "Would you buy from somebody that had failed three times in a row and never been successful?" (Chosun)

MEDIA ANALYSIS

-North Korea's Rocket Launch

Most of the ROK media gave play to yesterday's breakdown of UN Security Council discussions on a response to North Korea's latest rocket launch.

Citing AP, right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo reported that the U.S. would likely find a compromise by thoroughly enforcing existing UN sanctions on North Korea. JoongAng and other newspapers, including left-leaning Hankyoreh Shinmun and conservative Segye Ilbo, replayed a report by Japan's Jiji news agency that Tokyo has decided to independently pursue sanctions on North Korea. Moderate Hankook Ilbo, meanwhile, quoted Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan's statement to the National Assembly yesterday that the ROKG will make diplomatic efforts to resume the Six-Party Talks after UN Security Council discussions on North Korea conclude. Left-leaning Hankyoreh Shinmun headlined its editorial: "A Response to North Korea's Rocket Launch should be Conducive to Resuming the Six-Party Talks"

Conservative Chosun Ilbo front-paged a report that there are mounting calls in ROK military and political circles for the ROK to

SEOUL 00000568 002 OF 005

extend its missile range to over 500km, given that North Korea's recent rocket launch has demonstrated its long-range capabilities and the limitations of the ROK's current 300km-range missiles. The newspaper quoted former Vice Defense Minister Park Yong-ok as saying: "I think that the U.S. now has a weaker justification for restricting the range of Korea's ballistic missiles because of the North's latest rocket launch."

In a related development, moderate Hankook Ilbo commented in an editorial: "Strictly speaking, (the argument for enhancing our missile capability because of North Korea's rocket launch) is not an appropriate response to North Korea's long-range missiles. North Korea is capable of attacking the entire ROK with its scud missiles from a range of 300 to 700km. Accordingly, Taepodong-1 and Taepodong-2 missiles that range beyond Japanese territory do not pose any additional threat. ... At first glance, it seems desirable to increase the ROK's missile range to 500km to strike all of North Korea. However, it is not wise to openly discuss the matter with the U.S. while causing potential disputes with neighboring countries. Even without the missiles, the ROK military has strong deterrent capability."

Conservative Chosun Ilbo noted April 6 press remarks by Gen. James Cartwright, Vice Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, which called into question North Korea's rocket science technology. Asked whether he thinks North Korea has made significant technological advances with this rocket launch, Gen. Cartwright was quoted as replying: "Would you buy from somebody that had failed three times in a row and never been successful?"

Regarding growing calls in ROK political circles to send a special envoy to North Korea, conservative Dong-a Ilbo editorialized: "Now that North Korea is showing no sign of changing its attitude, we should focus our efforts on finding ways to impose sanctions on the North for its provocative rocket launch. ... Even for the sake of international cooperation, the ROKG and the ruling party should not raise the issue of sending a special envoy to North Korea, which is aimed at pacifying and pampering the North. ... The first meeting of North Korea's Supreme People's Assembly will be held tomorrow to reconfirm Chairman Kim's third term. In this situation, talk about dispatching a special envoy, which is neither feasible nor effective, will only contribute to "covering up" (condoning) North Korea's provocation and boosting its morale."

-President Obama's Visit to Turkey

Conservative Chosun Ilbo led the international news section with a report on President Obama's speech to the Turkish parliament. Chosun reported that President Obama's "speech of reconciliation," broadcast live by Arab satellite TV, focused on repairing ties with the Muslim world in general--ties that were strained by the Iraq War. Conservative Dong-a Ilbo headlined its story: "Obama's 'Embrace of Islam;' Obama Says, 'The U.S. is not and will never be at War with Islam'"

-President Obama in Iraq

Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo carried a straight, inside-page article reporting that President Obama made a "surprise" visit to Iraq on April 7 on his way home from his European tour. The newspaper reported that President Obama cheered up U.S. troops and met with Iraqi religious leaders.

OPINIONS/EDITORIALS -----

THERE IS NO NEED TO SEND SPECIAL ENVOY TO NORTH KOREA IF THE DISPATCH IS TO APPEASE NORTH KOREA
(Dong-a Ilbo, April 8, 2009, Page 31)

After North Korea's rocket provocation, political circles are raising the idea of sending a special envoy to North Korea. At yesterday's parliamentary to review government policies on

SEOUL 00000568 003 OF 005

diplomacy, unification and security issues, many ruling and opposition party lawmakers argued that the ROK should dispatch a special envoy to the North. Grand National Party (GNP) Rep. Chung Doo-un mentioned former GNP Rep. Lee Jae-oh as a candidate during an April 6 radio interview. While attributing strained inter-Korean ties to the ROKG's North Korea policy, the opposition party is making the case for the dispatch of a special envoy. Democratic Party (DP) Rep. Yoo Sun-ho argued for the dispatch, urging the ROKG to "admit its policy failures over the past year, overhaul its national security strategies and foreign policy and security lineup, and revise its North Korea policy with a view to peaceful inter-Korean relations through dialogue."

According to Rep. Yoo's logic, a special envoy is supposed to first apologize to North Korea for the Lee Myung-bak Administration's North Korea policy. This is typical behavior of creating division in the ROK society, which ignores the fact that if Seoul had continuously provided generous handouts to Pyongyang, as it did over the past decade, it would have further invigorated Pyongyang's investment in military technology.

Unification Minister Hyun In-taek said yesterday at the National Assembly, "We are not specifically considering sending a special envoy to North Korea." Dispatching a special envoy at this stage contrasts with the ROKG's position that it will "respond sternly and resolutely" to North Korea's provocation. In this sense, President Lee's April 3 statement in London that "We would send a special envoy to Pyongyang, if acceptable to the North" could give an impression that there is confusion in the ROKG's response.

Now that North Korea is showing no sign of changing its attitude, we should focus our efforts on finding ways to impose sanctions on the North for its provocative rocket launch. At the UN Security Council, the U.S. and Japan are making strenuous diplomatic efforts to impose sanctions on the North. Even for the sake of international cooperation, the ROKG and the ruling party should not, at this time, raise the issue of sending a special envoy to North Korea, which is aimed at pacifying and pampering the North. Following the shooting death of an ROK tourist at Mt. Kumgang and the ban on border traffic to and from the Kaesong Industrial Complex, North Korea detained an employee of Hyundai Asan, (further) aggravating inter-Korean relations. Now, with its rocket provocation, the North is rapidly bringing inter-Korean ties down to their lowest level. Instead of sending a special envoy to the North, it would be better if we receive a North Korean envoy

offering apologies.

Although the rocket launch turned out to be a failure, the North is falsely telling its people, "The North has placed a satellite in orbit," and is enthusiastically praising Chairman Kim Jong-il. The first meeting of North Korea's Supreme People's Assembly will be held tomorrow to reconfirm Chairman Kim's third term. In this situation, talking about dispatching a special envoy, which is neither feasible nor effective, will only contribute to "covering up" (condoning) North Korea's provocation and boosting its morale. Although the Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun Administrations sent a special envoy to the North several times, these actions ultimately helped the North to develop its nuclear and long-range missile developments and, and the ROK people had to pay more taxes (for the special envoy).

IT IS NOT TIME TO TALK ABOUT INCREASING MISSILE CAPABILITY
(Hankook Ilbo, April 8, 2009, Page 35)

It seems that an argument for enhancing our missile capability due to North Korea's long-range rocket launch is increasingly gaining force. In the National Assembly on April 6, Prime Minister Han Seung-soo said, "We need to review the ROK-U.S. missile guidelines which restrict our "missile sovereignty." This statement stems from the logic that since North Korea's rocket flew 3,200km despite technical flaws, the ROK, which possess only missiles with a range of less than 300km, should not tolerate this military imbalance any longer. However, this is a somewhat demagogic and blind argument. This matter should not be talked about carelessly.

SEOUL 00000568 004 OF 005

"The ROK-U.S. missile guidelines" amended in 2001 prohibits the ROK from possessing missiles with ranges over 300km and warhead loads over 500kg. The guidelines are based on the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) aimed at curbing the spread of missile technology and parts. But the U.S., averse to a missile arms race, used the MTCR as a pretext for restricting the ROK's military power. Therefore, an argument for restoring our missile sovereignty has been surfacing largely from the military circles. This (claim to missile sovereignty) is in the same vein as a claim to "nuclear sovereignty."

However, strictly speaking, (the argument for enhancing our missile capability because of North Korea's rocket launch) is not an appropriate response to North Korea's long-range missiles. North Korea is capable of attacking the entire ROK with its scud missiles from a range of 300 to 700km. Accordingly, Taepodong-1 and Taepodong-2 missiles that range beyond Japanese territory do not pose any additional threat. An argument that (our possession of long-range missiles) would make it difficult for the ROK to call on U.S. forces from Okinawa and Guam in case of emergency is not strategically wrong. But calling for possession of long-range missiles comparable to the level of North Korea is not appropriate in many aspects.

At first glance, it seems desirable to increase the ROK's missile range to 500km to strike all of North Korea. However, it is not wise to openly discuss the matter with the U.S. while causing potential disputes with neighboring countries. Even without the missiles, the ROK military has strong deterrent capability. Also, the ROK is developing cruise missiles with a range of 1,500km which are exempt from the missile guidelines. Moreover, KSLV-1, a space launch vehicle scheduled to be launched with a satellite mounted in July can fly 2,700km. Essentially, military build-up should be pursued quietly.

HOPING FOR A RESPONSE CONDUCIVE TO RESUMING SIX-PARTY TALKS
(Hankyoreh Shinmun, April 8, 2009, Page 27)

The UN Security Council's discussions over North Korea's long-range rocket launch have stalled. It looks as if the U.S. and Japan, which are calling for a hard-line response, stand opposed to China and Russia, which are supporting a moderate approach. But it is not necessarily that way. All parties except for Japan agree that the

Six-Party Talks should be resumed early.

U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice said that the UN Security Council's discussions will be focused on how to harmonize diplomatic efforts with pressures in order to engage North Korea in constructive cooperation again. Even though the U.S. government declared North Korea's rocket launch to be a flagrant violation of international rules, the U.S. stressed that its ultimate goal is to strengthen (Six Party Talks) negotiations with North Korea. This statement is not too different from the statement by Russia's Ambassador to the United Nations Vitaly Churkin who said that an essential tool for resolving every situation is the Six-Party Talks.

In a similar stance to Russia, China stressed a "careful and fair response." However, this attitude of putting a priority on a breakthrough in talks while sending a warning to North Korea would contradict the adoption of a Resolution sanctioning North Korea.

Some people assess North Korea's "satellite" launch as a failure. The rocket's second stage fell far short of where the North had said it would land, and the third stage did not work properly in the first place. On the morning of the launch date, North Korea notified the U.S., China and Russia of its rocket launch in advance, and prior to this, the North had announced a launch window for its rocket test and the coordinates at sea where it expected the first and second stages to splash down. Although its efforts to display its long-range rocket technology were provocative, it can be said that the North went through the necessary steps. The reason why each nation continues to hold open the possibility of dialogue (with North Korea) is because they judge that North Korea also wants

SEOUL 00000568 005 OF 005

negotiations.

At this moment, Japan is the most vocal nation. Japan seems to believe that by raising its voice, it can gain political benefits and create a public opinion favorable to arms buildup. In fact, over the past several years, Japan seldom played a role at the Six-Party Talks. It is inappropriate for the ROKG to show its intention to fall into step with Japan. The ruling party's argument that the ROK should fully participate in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), establish the Missile Defense (MD) system and increase its missile range is not different from the position of Japan, which only seeks its own national interests.

When we only emphasize cooperation with the U.S. and Japan, we might forget what the cooperation is for. Now is the time to resolve the consequences of the rocket launch as early as possible and make every effort to resume the Six-Party Talks.

STEPHENS